883 The conjugal duty. —The wife owes her husband the fulfillment of the conjugal duty.

The wife must never evade it except when she is unwell, pregnant, or when she is nursing. We can see, therefore, that among the Mossi in particular and among the Sudanese in general (for the same customs prevail in this area among all Sudanese Negroes) there is great tact-
[853] fulness. One appreciates this all the more if one bears in mind that here the women suckle their children for two or three years.

"If," says Vadier, "a woman should evade her husband from newly-wed shyness or from any other motive, he would first use all the means of persuasion at his command and, especially, beg the wife's relatives
[593] to speak to her. Should their exhortations prove vain, constraint would be used by giving the wife a beating or putting her in irons.
[586] Finally, should these measures fail to bring the spouse to compliance, she could be turned out by her husband.

"In return, the husband owes the wife the same conjugal duty which he has the right to demand from her.

"Should the husband fail to fulfill it because of impotence, sickness, or simply from ill will, the neglected wife would mention the matter to the family head's first wife, who would in turn notify him.

833 "Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity,
586 the wife would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers or, if there were none, to his closest male relative, but never to one of his sons. Should it be due merely to ill-feeling, a protest would be made, and should this fail to have any effect after several days, the wife would be allowed to return to her family." /245/

Let us state immediately that these contingencies almost never arise or are so rare as to be practically nonexistent. Custom anticipates them, however, and we have just described what happens when perchance they do arise.

562 Women's property. —Women may own individual property, as we
● 422 already know, goods which are not shared communally and which belong wholly to them. These goods come from various sources, sometimes the women's small plots of land, sometimes a surplus from the grain they are given to prepare food and which, once made into dolo, is sold for cowries. Sometimes also, the husband's munificence provides them with bracelets and other jewelry. Once given, this jewelry is wholly theirs, and it is added to the trinkets they procure with their own resources.

423 also belong to the group, as we shall see later. The group, however,
571 owns neither slaves nor livestock.

421 Household property. —As we know, during the rainy or cultivating
571 season, the husband works two days out of three for his work group.
592 The third day is his. On that day he works in his small field, helped by his wife or wives. During the dry season, the husband does not work for the group but for himself alone, except for repair work on the compound huts.

571 The household is provided with food by the work group seven months
592 out of twelve and is fed with the produce of its own field for five months.

592 The primary possession of the household, therefore, is its private
423 field.

The field belonging to the household of the head of the work group is marked by a special characteristic. Since the head of the group is busy at all times with the communal field, even on the third day, his small plot is cultivated exclusively by his wives (and by his slaves, if he has any). Hence, his food is procured by his wives five months out of twelve. This only applies, however, to the heads of work groups (as well as zaka and family heads who are necessarily heads of work groups also).

423 Individual property. —Mossi women have tiny cultivated patches
562 which are wholly theirs, which do not belong to the work group or to
422 the household and which they work after five o'clock in the evening whenever possible. This is private property. Clothing, women's jewelry, etc., are also individually owned.

The husband and children also own private property. Actually,
423 the better to distinguish between individual and communal property (whether belonging to the household, the work group, the compound, or the family), we shall review below each type of property in turn.

Fields. —The fields belong primarily to the work group. (They belong only exceptionally to the compound, when it is so small that there is only one work group.) In addition to the fields of the work group, there is the household field. Finally, beside the household field, there are the private plots, for example, the little patches of the women and young men.

Work implements. —These tools (daba, axes, etc.) belong to the
422 work group. To work their small fields (both household and private),
571 men and women use the daba of their work group, but if they damage

422 591 them, they must repair them at their own expense. Those implements which are worn out are replaced by the head of the work group.

422 231 Domestic animals. —Chickens, goats, sheep, donkeys, etc., are all fully owned on an individual basis and not by the group or even by the household. The animal is owned by the man or woman who bought /269/ it. Nevertheless, all the goats and sheep in a compound are gathered together, they sleep in the same place, and they are led to the bush in a flock by the little boys of the compound. The animals of the total family or of the village, on the other hand, are never gathered together.

562 Wives. —I need not emphasize that wives are obviously private property. There are no wives owned in common by the village, the family, the compound, or the work group. The wife, however, is in some measure considered to belong to the compound or even to the family in the sense that a man's wives always go to his brother when he dies.

423 592 The compound. —We saw earlier what applies here. The compound belongs to the zakasoba, but only as a representative of the zaka, as a manager of the property of this subfamilial group. It does not belong to him as private property, in the Roman sense of jus utendi et abutendi /right of use and abuse/. It belongs, ultimately, to the zaka itself.

If this is so, it is not less true that those habitable portions of the zaka, the cabins or huts, are definitely allocated to specific households which have rights of usufruct over them. Thus, the ownership belongs to the zaka, as represented by its head. The usufruct belongs to the households or individuals.

Finally, we may note, as we did earlier, that a hut built exclusively by a household with its own labor or by a single individual of the zaka may be torn down and destroyed by him since it is household or private property set up on subfamilial property. This case, however, is quite exceptional.

The large cabins or huts for millet belong to the cultivating groups. There are also huts for millet belonging to the household, where the husband stores the harvest from the household field. Finally, the 422 large earthen vases, the jars which stand in the huts, lead us from the compound to the subject of furniture. These jars are made by the women and belong individually to specific women.

Furniture. —The furniture, which we shall study in greater detail under "Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/, is very scanty and crude. It is owned privately.

422 415 Household utensils. —The large earthen slabs set up to crush the grain belong to the compound, but the rectangular granitic stones set into the slabs are owned by individual women, as are the movable pestles used to pound grain on the stones.

422 412 592 571 The wooden mortars and pestles, which are very useful and, besides, are heavy, cumbersome, and difficult to destroy, belong to the compound and sometimes to the head of the work group, in other words, to the group itself. In fact, the head of the work group provides part of these implements when the ones purchased by the zakasoba are insufficient.

422 415 592 As for the canari, the largest, which are like small vats and may be as high as one or one and a half meters, are used to hold the dolo /270/ made by the women. They belong to the compound, and they are bought by the compound head. The ordinary canari (25 to 30 centimeters high and used to fetch water or to cook) belong privately to each woman of the compound. The same applies to gourds. The women often buy their canari or gourds with their husband's cowries, but the object, once bought, belongs to them.

422 Clothing. —Clothes are owned fully on a private basis, no matter what their origin. Thus, the skirt cloth bought by the husband for his wife belongs to her.

Ornaments and jewelry. —These are also owned privately, no matter what their origin. Hence, they belong to each man, each woman, each child.

Weapons. —They are likewise owned privately.

Amulets, charms. —The case is the same as for weapons. If, however, we use the word "charm" in its broadest sense, as any object pertaining to the cult, there are family charms which are owned by the family.

Cowries, metal coins, etc. —These are likewise private property.

421 In short, property belonging to the total family is practically nonexistent among the Mossi of Yatenga. There is subfamilial (compound) property and the property of that economic section of the subfamily which is called a work group. In addition to this communal property, there are household property and strictly private property.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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CHAPTER SEVEN

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1. Dim Delobson, pp. 153ff.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–54.
3. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 674.
4. Crozat, p. 4849.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Skinner, "Trade and Markets," pp. 237–78.
7. Barth, III, 644–49.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 202–4.
9. Dubois, pp. 282–92, 300.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers: Cd. 788–27, No. 357, Acc. Papers, Vol. LXIV (1902).
11. Marc, p. 178.
12. Binger, I, 467.
13. Crozat, p. 4849.
14. Binger, I, 465.
15. Mangin, p. 23.
16. Dim Delobson, pp. 85–86.
17. Ruelle, p. 679.
18. Bovill, p. 244.
19. Gautier, p. 139; cf. Mangin, p. 112.
20. Cf. Sa'di, p. 168.

[422]

21. The chief of the Kamboinse was the only Mossi "chief" to possess a stool, which is indicative of an Akan origin. The Akan origin of this group is further supported by Koelle's evidence: a Mossi informant told him that the Mossi called the Ashanti "Kamboinse" (Koelle, p. 6).

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22. Skinner, "The Mossi 'Pogsioure,'" pp. 20–22.
23. Cf. Ouédraogo and Prost, pp. 16–18.
24. Dim Delobson, p. 25.
25. Binger, I, 470.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 502–4.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 504–5.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 502.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Cf. Dim Delobson, p. 156. He speculates that the Mogho Naba himself sacrificed the animals in the presence of his senior wife and courtiers.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[184]

3. Tauxier (*Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 379) reports that a comparable ceremony among the Yatenga Mossi was called the "Bega," and that in reality it was a Fulse ceremony "adopted by the Mossi." According to him, both the Fulse and the Mossi held this festival in order to obtain good harvests the following year, and made sacrifices to "the ancestors, to the Earth, and to God."

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4. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 588.

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5. Dim Delobson's description (pp. 148 ff) of the Tense differs somewhat from that given to me by my respondents. According to his version, the Tansoba played the role I have ascribed to the Larhalle Naba. Furthermore, he states that the Tense was held on Friday, an impossible fact since Saturday is the Mossi "day of the dead." In any case, all of my respondents insisted that Saturday, and not Friday, was the day on which the Tense was held. It is possible that Dim Delobson mistook the eve of the festival for its beginning, in which case his error is understandable. In most other respects our descriptions are not too different.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
7. There is a widespread tradition in Mossi country that the Tenkodogo Naba made and still makes similar sacrifices at Kouroungoutenga and Sansabloga, two important earth shrines. There is a controversy about whether human sacrifices were ever offered there. The missionaries in the region claim they were. The Mossi deny this and accuse the missionaries of slander.

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12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

175 437 441 people have become Mossicized in language and culture, but it is doubtful whether they would have taken the Hausa for Mossi. The true Mossi may have played a minor role in the caravan trade, but I am certain that they took part in it and that they did so before the French conquest of their country.

175 437 439 There is little doubt that the Mossi traded with the caravans that passed *through* their country. Crozat, who visited Moro Naba Wobogo six years before the conquest, reported that the king

[643] . . . appeared to have had some business relations with white merchants who came up to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reasons to be pleased with their integrity and that the silver which they sent to him contained plenty of copper. It happens also that traders may come as far as Wagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them on hand during my stay at Wagadougou. I was told that he was an important marabout, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He has never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Wagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi. (Crozat 1891)

The caravans which passed through Mossi country were well organized but seemed to have lacked the regularity which was characteristic of the trans-Sahara ones. Those caravans coming from the north were apparently more regular since they had to await the coming of the great trans-Sahara caravans, which brought them salt and other [366] valuable merchandise. Those coming from Salaga and points south [227] traveled at all times of the year, a fact which is corroborated by the voyage of Krauss, who arrived at the Bere market during August and the height of the Mossi planting season. This was a period of scarcity or "hungry period" as Krauss himself observed, and it is doubtful whether the Mossi had much to trade at this time. Nevertheless, caravaneers always found some trade goods at the larger Mossi market centers all through the year, even if only cloth and cotton bands.

[22] The main season for external trade in Mossi country came after the harvest. In the words of Marc, who served there shortly after the conquest:

Towards the end of the rainy season, in September or October, the [34] Yarse begin to assemble the livestock in order to leave for the south. In certain large commercial centers like Kaya, Pouitenga, Dakay, one finds [422] around this period the owners of livestock: Mossi chiefs, Fulani or rich natives, who are ready to sell their animals. People also assemble sheep of